

KEEWATIN INDIAN MISSIONS

BISHOP

*Ovide Charlebois*  
o.m.i.

APOSTLE AND FRIEND OF THE INDIANS







# Introduction

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IT IS SINCE he left us but his face has not faded from the memories of those who knew this humble old man, Bishop Charlebois, first Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin. Wherever he went, he left behind him a reputation for holiness.

And now this tireless traveller of the forests of Manitoba and of Saskatchewan is before Rome's holy tribunals awaiting the Church's infallible judgment on his life.

What did he do that makes him a proper subject for a process of beatification? Does his merit lie in his 46 years as missionary in an arid country, or in earning for himself the title of "the wandering Bishop"?

No, his glory lies elsewhere, shining forth in the eyes of God and in those of Mary Immaculate. Heroic strength of soul, admirable patience and humility in the difficulties of his apostolic life, an efficacious desire for holiness, these are the traits which enthrall us in the features of this missionary bishop.

Whoever reads these pages will live a dialogue with a real saint. Bishop Charlebois' simple, down-to-earth and living words expose at once the great soul of him. To meet him was to be attracted irresistibly and those who penetrated greatly into his personality were drawn up to the heights with him.

He knew his greatest joy when Pope Pius XI followed his supplication in proclaiming St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus as Patroness of Missions and Missionaries, thus acknowledging at the same time the apostolic influence of humility and prayer.

Wishing in no way to anticipate the Church's decision, we yet believe, with those who are acquainted with him, in Bishop Charlebois' sanctity and hope that our prayers will obtain for this man from our own land the glory of canonization.

*Paul Emile Charland, O.M.I.*

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KEEWATIN: Name of the mission territory inhabited for the most part by Indians, in Northern Manitoba and Northern Saskatchewan, Canada.

Vicar Apostolic: His Excellency Bishop Paul DUMOUCHEL, O.M.I., Bishop's Residence, The Pas, Manitoba.

# Ovide Charlebois

Born at Oka the 17th of February, 1862, Bishop Charlebois was the 7th of a family of 14 children. Small farmers, his parents worked a farm they did not own. Around the time Ovide was born, they acquired a farm in the next parish, St. Benoit, but soon found out that the land was too poor to make a living for their large family out of it. Hyacinthe Charlebois then decided to leave the shores of the Lake of Two Mountains and become a colonist.

## IN THE UPCOUNTRY

He chose a piece of land situated about 25 miles north of St. Jerome, in territory later to form St. Marguerite parish. It was 1864 and Ovide was but 2 years old.

Despite the poverty he found in his new home, Mr. Charlebois put religious duties first: family prayer, Sunday Mass. Young Ovide there began his apprenticeship for the missionary life: the 12 miles lying between them and the St. Adele church were not enough to deprive the Charlebois family of the sacraments.

The child grew up in an atmosphere of piety and toil. He seems to have been endowed with excellent natural talents from his earliest years. Physically, he reached an extraordinary development. In the condition of the family at that time, hunting and fishing were a great help to the food supply, and Ovide soon became expert in handling a canoe, using a gun, hunting hares and partridge and fishing for trout.

But it was poor farming country. The first years had been good, but the land, quickly worn out, produced less and less, and Ovide's father had to sell his farm in St. Marguerite; in the fall to 1878 he settled at L'Assomption, gave practical lessons to the agricultural students and oversaw the college farmwork. Ovide had begun his classical course the previous year.

## AT L'ASSOMPTION COLLEGE

Never a brilliant scholar, Ovide was possessed of a level head and great good sense; serious and persistent work allowed him to be an above-average pupil in his class.

Of his college life, his second year (Syntaxe) Professor, Canon Auguste Picotte, offers this precious testimony: "One word will describe, in all frankness, what Ovide the student was: a "model" scholar in everything. He was very pious...; he was obedience personified, respectful to his professors; he liked study and aimed to succeed. Towards his fellow students, he was good and charitable; he never had enemies."

At times mischievous, Ovide knew what it was to laugh and have fun. When he reached his last year of college, he was beloved and esteemed by all. This was 1882, he was 20 and the time had come for him to choose a career.

**Saints often seem remote and foreign to our nature. Ovide Charlebois was a product of the land, one of our own. Should the Church proclaim his sanctity, in him we will find a guide familiar with the road we follow.**

## WITH THE OBLATES

In a little book given him by a classmate, written by St. Alphonsus Liguori on the religious life, Ovide found his path. Relatively easy was the choice of a congregation: several of the college's brilliant students had already gone to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate where missionary life in the Canadian West fitted marvelously with the aspirations of young Charlebois.

The remainder of his life story will tell us of the quality of the formation acquired during his years of preparation for a life as religious and priest. At an age when we are rather inclined to self-love and presumption, the virtue he set for himself in particular was that of humility, "especially" he wrote, "in my thoughts and in my contacts with companions." Towards the end of his Scholasticate, we find that he penned a resolution which his whole life was to portray: "Wherever I shall find myself with my brethren, I shall consider myself their servant. Consequently, I shall respect them, I shall serve them with pleasure and eagerness."

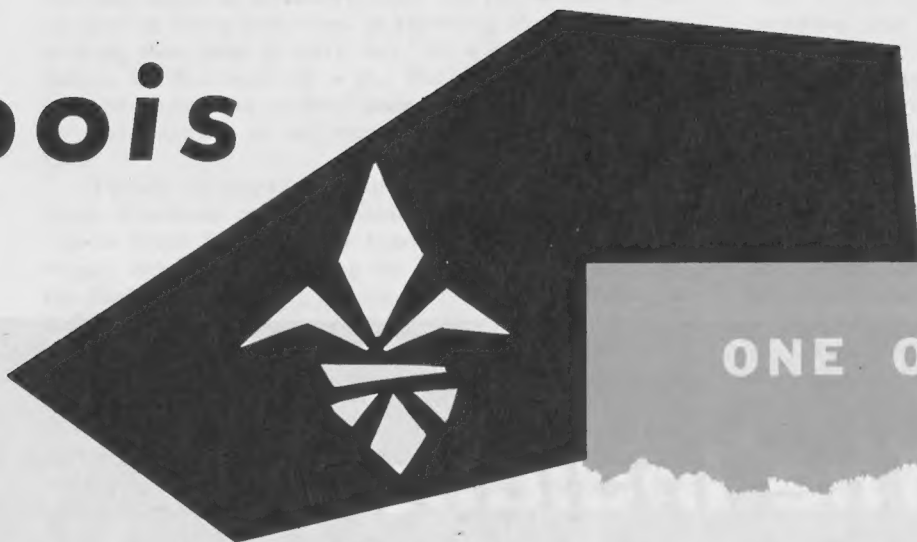
## HIS CHARACTER

Nothing is more unfair to a man than to trace his character in a few lines without the thousand hues which go to make up the features of a personality. At this period of his life, Ovide Charlebois stands out as a knight intrepid in duty. The cult of duty was the most precious heritage left by Mr. Charlebois to his children. This manly trait of his character was softened by a generous sensitivity, accentuated by the early death of his mother. A natural timidity which changed gradually into a true humility; a simplicity and joviality almost childlike: that is the picture we retain of Bishop Charlebois.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF A SAINT

At this period the great figure of Bishop Grandin of St. Albert's Diocese drew young people by the influence of his sanctity. His visit left a profound mark in the soul of the young Oblate. Long afterwards he would recall the

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## ONE OF OUR OWN

words of the Servant of God: "Bishop Grandin had a good reason for telling us on each visit he made to the scholasticate or to the Novitiate: If you want to come to the Northwest, love God a lot. Do not come out of love for me; but out of love for the good Lord."

### MISSIONARY AMONG THE INDIANS

During the General Chapter of 1887 Bishop Grandin asked the Superior General of the Oblates for subjects and obtained Brother Ovide Charlebois who was finishing his theological studies at Ottawa. The Bishop wrote of this on June 23 on the boat bringing him back from Europe:

"Our Very Reverend Father General told me a few days ago some good news for me and, I hope, for my diocese. It was that the good Lord had chosen you, through him, to come and share our labors. I believe that you love God well enough to find this good news, too. However I must tell you that if you consult your flesh and blood you might feel it to be bad news. But you have not taken up the religious life to enjoy yourself; and God is showing you that He loves you and has confidence in you, since He confides to you a mission which is entirely devotedness.

"Courage, dear Brother. Be wholly the man of God; give yourself to Him particularly that He may use you for His glory."

### CUMBERLAND'S SOLITUDE

The first post his superiors confided to the young missionary was St. Joseph's Mission at Lake Cumberland; lone missionary at this spot, he had to look after neighbouring posts, very often going over 100 miles to them. The young missionary's isolation at Cumberland was to last 16 long years, during which he saw his fellow missionaries but occasionally.

Solitude weighed on the young missionary. Of all the miseries of missionary life, we really believe that this was the hardest for his affectionate heart. From the beginning of his stay at Cumberland, he often wept: "I cried a



Assumption College  
His Alma Mater

*This seminary has given numerous vocations to the Congregation of the Oblates and to the Keewatin.*

lot on reading your letter,' he wrote his brother William. 'Alone in my tiny room, I allowed my tears to flow unchecked. You will find them all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus where I am careful to lay them, for the Divine Heart is my refuge in such moments. It is Him also who makes my tears so sweet and delicious. To weep in union with Jesus is verily the greatest happiness here below. I never grasped this truth so thoroughly as at present.

### THE OBJECT OF MY DESIRES

"Be assured that I am content and happy in my new post. You know that the Indian missions had long been the object of my desires; I thank God for having sent me to them."

Cumberland, Sept. 17, 1889.

### BUT WHAT A POOR COUNTRY!

"Strangers who pass through here all keep repeating: 'What a poor country. I would not live here for all the money in the world!' They are quite right; you have to be crazy to live here for the sake of mere money; but when it concerns the salvation of souls, it isn't the same. Isn't the salvation of a single soul worth more than all the money in the world! That is what explains the missionary's happiness despite the country's poverty. If our country is ugly on earth, we must hope that we will have a beautiful one up above. There again is a thought that gives me greater heart."

Echo du Cumberland, June 12, 1890.





# The Indians' Great Friend

by Hector Thiboutot, O.M.I.

*IT WAS MARCH THE 28TH in the morning that I left my savages,<sup>1</sup> glad to have been able to do a little charity among them and to have done them good in every respect, but especially to their souls. I was also glad to have had the chance to taste the misery of these poor savages; while I was with them, I was subject to the same regime as they for food, sleeping, etc. Having no more food myself, I had to be content with the fish they killed daily in their nets. I thus learned a little by experience what the life of a savage is. My practical reflection was this: that if they knew how to profit by their misery, they would all be saints ready to be canonized."*

Nelson House, Winter of 1892.

1. At that time it was still the custom to give the name of savage to the Canadian Indian: we must not seek a pejorative sense to this word, especially from Bishop Charlebois' pen.

Here is the testimony of a veteran of the Keewatin Missions who worked under Bishop Charlebois' direction and knew him in the full maturity of his apostolic life. Father Thiboutot tells us of the sincere love Bishop Charlebois bore his Indians.

One cannot doubt the religious affection of Bishop Ovide Charlebois for the children of the Keewatin forests. His long career as missionary priest and pioneer bishop was all spent in living with them, in expending himself for them, in doing them good in every way. As a priest he loved the Indians for their souls. It is true that everybody loves what costs him most: but ministry among the Indians imposes all sorts of sacrifices on the missionary, patience, devotedness, labor.

Through 16 years in the isolation of Cumberland, Father Ovide Charlebois catechized, visited the sick, made numerous trips to Grand Rapid, to Lake Pelican, went as far as Pakitawagan, Nelson House, serving the camps stretched out along the Saskatchewan River, the Churchill, the Bois Brulé. He built three churches, covered hundreds of miles by paddle. Everywhere he prayed and had people pray: the word of God fell from the lips of the missionary as precious dew upon these new souls.

What devotedness he showed when he became Principal of the Indian School at Duck Lake from 1903 to 1910. At the beginning of the century, the Indians still understood but little the importance of education. The discipline of a regular house was considered an interference to the liberty of parents and children. Many did not want to send their children to school. How many visits were made to the reserves to enlighten minds and to recruit; sometimes charity went beyond the rules and he came back with a child below the age, even an abandoned baby.

In 1910, he became bishop of the immense Keewatin territory whose population is almost exclusively Indian. Bishop Charlebois no longer knew any limit to his zeal. He wanted to convert to the Catholic faith and save all the souls confided to him. His first act was the pastoral visit, a 2,000-mile canoe trip, broken by endless portages.

At this time, the Hudson Bay Eskimos were under Bishop Charlebois' jurisdiction; they would remain such until 1925. Preoccupied with this most abandoned section of his flock, already in 1911 he had sent Father Arsene Turquetil to Chesterfield Inlet. He himself was to visit the Eskimos in 1923, after he had opened the missions of Chesterfield and St. Theresa Point.

Like a father to his children, he could not remain indifferent over the physical suffering of the Indians; hospitals and nuns were needed. So he turned beggar to get the necessary money to build hospitals at The Pas and Ile à La Crosse. Every day he stayed at the bishop's residence, he would make it a duty to visit his "children" at St. Anthony's Hospital.

By vocation a missionary of the poor, Bishop Ovide Charlebois loved the Indians not so much because of their privations now and then, but because of their lack of culture and their ignorance of responsibilities in life. Often he expressed his admiration for the particular qualities of the Indians: their total abandonment to Providence and their detachment from riches, for they will give everything they own without worrying about to-morrow. On this point, he himself rivalled them in many circumstances.

He was always able to discern, respect and encourage the legitimate traditions and customs of the Indians, as well as their admirable ingeniousness. The natural riches of their minds showed itself in their ability to survive in the heart of the forest. All the treasure of their heritage is in their secrets for tanning hides, of building canoes, of making harness and fishing nets, of using medicinal plants.

Love shows itself through acts of respect and generosity. Bishop Charlebois knew how to appreciate the fine human

and supernatural qualities of his Indians, but like a good father he also knew how to point out their failings as well. This he did with patience and kindness after beginning by accepting them for his own sanctification. Theirs are souls that cost dear, he used to say, because of the sacrifices and devotedness they imposed on missionaries.

For the Indians, he spent himself from morn to night, and often during the night. To understand them better he learned their tongue, so well that it became his own. During his moments of isolation, he loved to sing the Cree hymn "KISIKOK ITEIMATAK" (Let Us Think of Heaven).

True love is recognizable and its attraction is irresistible: so the best testimony is the love and affection the Indians bore their spiritual Father. They sensed that they were loved by him. Each of his visits was a period of joy surpassing; all one joyful family, they pressed around him. After the official reception the confidences began: he had a heart for all needs. How many times during his long career did he go to the defense of Indians persecuted by the overreaching of white men!

Before he died he had stipulated in his will: "I have nothing of my own, all that I have had was given me for the poor." Bishop Charlebois considered the Indians as his own children: of all he received he never kept anything for himself. He taught them in every way, but always with a jovial good humor. He brought them especially the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus and of the Most Blessed Virgin, for Bishop Charlebois was ever a man of God. This was the secret of his generous and selfless love for the poor children of the forest. He loved the Indians so as to lead them To JESUS THROUGH MARY.

*The Father among his children, in his visit "at home".*



*The Patriarch welcomes the little ones; he always had a special liking for the very young.*



*In his last pastoral visit, Bishop Charlebois gets acquainted with a pagan chief.*



# **"If we do not become saints, we are senseless"**

*Leitmotiv of Bishop Charlebois*

All who knew Bishop Charlebois intimately during his last years of life know that his great desires for perfection were not useless, that grace was not vain in him. He was not deaf to the appeal of the ideal: his career was a persevering climb upwards in the ways of perfect virtue. The degree of glory which he attained is known to God alone, but we can at least say of him what Scripture declares of the just man: "his memory is in benediction."

*Bishop Martin Lajeunesse, O.M.I.*

*(Vertus de Mgr Charlebois, p. 97)*

## **HIS DESIRE FOR HOLINESS**

*"You would like to know, wouldn't you, the result of this all-too-short retreat? Well, here it is in few words: WE ARE ALL FIRST-CLASS DUNCES IF WE DON'T BECOME SAINTS." That was the result or final conclusion of all my reflections. Yes, we are fools if we do not save ourselves, and especially we who are religious. Let us then be saints; whatever the cost, let us be saints. All of us, no matter how many we are, can do it; and it is easy: let us love God; and to love God, let us be humble and mortified. Once again, let us be saints, great saints; otherwise we are fools. I cannot repeat this song enough, I am so convinced of its truth."*

*Lake Pelican, Sept. 23, 1888.*

*HERE IS THE YOUNG MISSIONARY'S RESOLVE: "To do only religious acts. That is to say to make all my actions conformable to our Holy Rule and to the spirit of our Rule. Having been strongly moved to become a saint whatever the cost, I felt that there was no shorter or easier road: to be a religious in everything and everywhere, in thought, in word, in action: during the day and during the night, alone as with a companion."*

*Sept. 22, 1888.*

*HOW DID HE KEEP IT? Let Father A. Lajeunesse who lived at his side in 1902 and 1903 tell it. "Everywhere, he was always on time, not losing a single minute, accomplishing all his exercises like a simple novice; but it was particularly during trips that his great religious spirit was manifested. His*



Excellency profited by every stop to perform his regular obligations; while I took ten minutes to place my fly netting called for by the presence of the "mosquitoes", his was put up in one minute and at once recitation of the Breviary or spiritual reading had begun. Bishop Charlebois always carried with him the NEW TESTAMENT in which he did his Holy Scripture and prepared his morning meditation, afterwards finished during his canoe trip; the IMITATION OF CHRIST was another "inseparable" of Bishop Charlebois' who used it for his daily spiritual reading. At four o'clock, all the exercises of the Rule had been done... yes, indeed, one might have said that he had made a vow never to lose a minute."

A. Lajeunesse, O.M.I.: Mgr Charlebois.

## SLOW MARTYRDOM

"Since my last retreat, a pious thought occupies my mind and does me good. Perhaps it will do as much for you; I am going to tell you it. It is to become a martyr. It is no small pretention, don't you think! You ask me at once who will be my executioners. It is very simple, they are the mosquitoes, they will be my faults, my temptations, my labors, my privations, etc., etc. Do you understand now?

"It is not a martyrdom lasting a few hours that I wish for, but a martyrdom lasting all my life. Since we are not for an instant without having a great deal to suffer, I told myself: why shouldn't I accept everything as a sort of martyrdom? Will that not be as agreeable to God as the momentary sufferings of the real martyrs?

"Thus I consider myself as at a stake where I am being burnt with a slow fire in such a way that my life is preserved for a long time. I assure you that this thought helps a lot to take every suffering with patience. Moreover, isn't this thought conformable to the spirit of the Sacred Heart, and you will see that we receive at once the strength to enable us to endure everything with joy."

June 17, 1888.

## MY EXECUTIONERS: THE MOSQUITOES

"If I have come back safe and sound", wrote the bishop after one trip, "that does not mean to say that I am intact. The mosquitoes managed to rob me of part of my blood and flesh. Never before have I seen so many. Sometimes we were inclined to weep with discouragement. It is all over now. There remains but the satisfaction of having endured something for Our Lord."

July 17, 1917.

"At Mass, they were like myriads of little angels come to sing God's praises while sacrificing me when I was offering up the Holy Victim."

Echo du Cumberland, June 14, 1888.

## "PASSION OF CHRIST, STRENGTHEN ME."

"All trace of the road had disappeared, and the sun having softened the snow, I sank regularly up to my knees, and my snowshoes remained continually covered with a thick and heavy layer of snow which I had to drag along. And what can be said of the many falls absolutely unavoidable when the snow is melting like that! But these falls I loved, because it seemed that they made me in some sort like to Our Lord giving away under the weight of His Cross. It was such thoughts, I believe, that gave me the strength to open up a road like that from 4 A.M. until 6 o'clock in the evening."

Voix du jeune missionnaire, April 24, 1892.



# Bishop Ern



When St. Paul tells of his apostolic journeyings, he does so for Christ's glory. "Paul, My grace is sufficient unto thee; for My strength is shown in thy weakness." He gave as a sign of his mission his labors and sufferings of the apostolic life.

"Often exposed to death... thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was adrift on the sea; in journeyings often, in perils from floods, in perils from robbers, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea; in labor and hardship, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these outer things, there my daily pressing anxiety, the care of all the churches!"

2 Cor. XI, 23-29

When Bishop Charlebois saw himself named, in 1910, Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin, he received as his allotment a Church which had to be founded, its domain covering the north of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and extending from the 53rd parallel up to the Pole. Of all the apostolic vicariates existing at the time, it was certainly the one whose administration and supply promised to be the most difficult.

In the western part of the Vicariate, the relatively numerous missions were far from responding to the needs of the population. The whole immense eastern region still had to be evangelized. In addition, there were the Eskimos of Hudson Bay who had never yet seen a Catholic priest.

And to meet all those needs, the new Vicar Apostolic was able to call on a dozen missionaries, several of them arriving at their old age.

But in this huge virgin forest where the Indians were scattered about, the biggest obstacle was travelling: Travels without limit at the cost of constant dangers and of harassing fatigues. The principal dwelling place of Bishop Charlebois was, in fact, the open road; or rather the forest, for there was never any road and often a path had to be beaten along the portages and in the snow.

The twenty-three years of his episcopate would see him constantly on the go, in pursuit of his flock, founding new missions, visiting them two or three times a year. A part of his martyrdom was the relentless travelling. He tells of his episcopal travels with simplicity in a style which reminds us of the Epistles of St. Paul:

a n t . . .



*"During this trip, I covered about 300 MILES by railroad, 80 MILES in big wagons without springs over terrible roads, 2,000 MILES by canoe, 40 TO 50 MILES on foot in the portages through the forest. I slept 60 TIMES on the ground, sheltered by a little canvas tent. I celebrated Holy Mass as often under the same tent. I visited 14 MISSIONS comprising a population of 4,500 CATHOLIC INDIANS; six of these missions had never been visited by a bishop. I preached 7 RETREATS of four to six days. I confirmed 1,100 SAVAGES whose good dispositions greatly edified me."*

First Episcopal Journey, 1911.

*"I travelled more than 1,000 MILES by canoe. I made 80 PORTAGES with my luggage on my back, through the forest, sometimes on the rocks, sometimes in floating swamps. And the mosquitoes! You understand, there were lots of them!... I came back safe and sound and with the assurance of having done good to the souls of the savages. That rewards me for the few little troubles we had."*

Letter to a Benefactress, August 23, 1932.

## THE PORTAGES

All other difficulties disappear compared with the famous "PORTAGES" when you have to carry, from one body of water to another, baggage, and boats. And the bishop errant travelled over so many of these portages! Listen to him describe some during his first pastoral journey:

*"A tiring day! Several portages had to be made, a good number of rapids to shoot, lakes to cross, and always in a tropical heat. But the best was when our guide got lost on a lake. We had to paddle fifteen miles for nothing... I used my paddle almost all day... So I am very tired tonight. They say in such a case a hard bed is the best to rest on. I shall rest nicely, since I am sleeping on the rock."*

*"What a hard day again," he goes on a little farther. 'Portages and nothing but portages. In all, five, from two to two and a half miles long. Consequently, since morning, we have made from ten to twelve miles with our paddles and our baggage on our backs. It didn't help much to rest us from our fatigue of yesterday. So, tonight, each one is worn out.'*

*"The highlight of the day was an unexpected portage. During more than two hours, we had the consolation of slogging through water and mud halfway up our calves, then of hitching ourselves to the canoe like beasts of burden. To keep my shoes dry, I left then in the canoe and used the SHOES OF OUR FIRST PARENTS. Since they are not thick-soled, they got many a scratch in the bush. Fortunately time will look after the repairs at no expense!"*

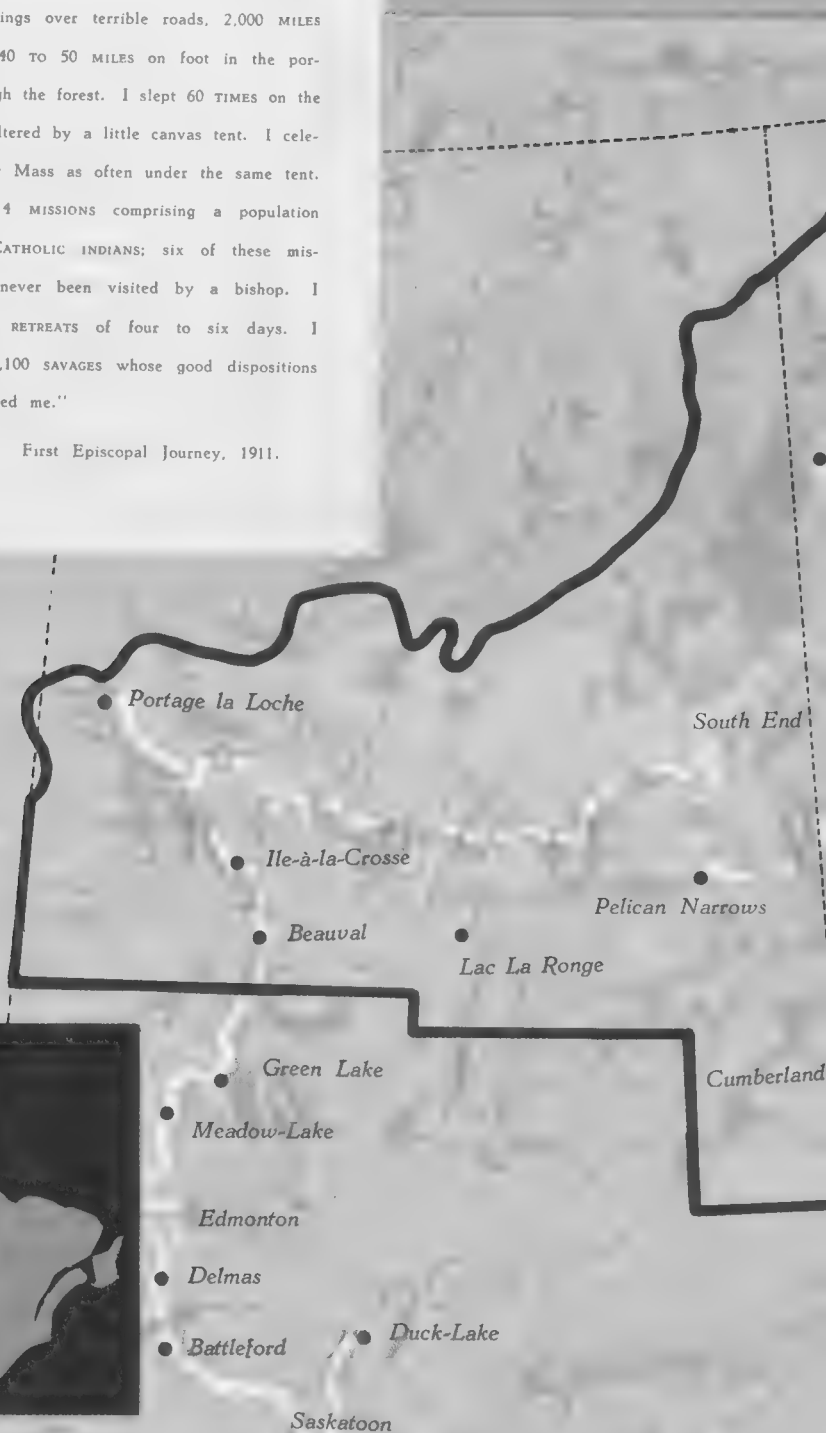
*"Everyone has his sensitive spots," he reports another time. 'For my part, my shoulders and my feet complain of treatment they have received. The former found the burden too heavy and the latter miss the pieces of skin left on roots and stones.'"*

The Beginnings of a Missionary Bishop, pp. 54, 85.



"During this trip, I covered about 300 MILES by railroad, 80 MILES in big wagons without springs over terrible roads, 2,000 MILES by canoe, 40 to 50 MILES on foot in the portages through the forest. I slept 60 TIMES on the ground, sheltered by a little canvas tent. I celebrated Holy Mass as often under the same tent. I visited 14 MISSIONS comprising a population of 4,500 CATHOLIC INDIANS; six of these missions had never been visited by a bishop. I preached 7 RETREATS of four to six days. I confirmed 1,100 SAVAGES whose good dispositions greatly edified me."

First Episcopal Journey, 1911.



# rching our Souls

First Episcopal Journey, 1911.





## You Who Knew Him...

his bishop

## INTERVIEW

Q. — Father, why did Ovide Charlebois become a priest and missionary?

A. — *He loved God and wanted to serve him with all his strength. So he wished to fulfill his commandment to go and teach, baptize and guide to Heaven the souls redeemed at the price of the Blood of Jesus.*

Q. — Was his first thought to convert souls or to serve God?

A. — *Both the one and the other...*

— But which of the two motives was foremost? More precisely, did Father Ovide Charlebois show his discontent when, after a journey of trouble and misery, souls did not respond to the appeals of grace which he brought them?

— *Father Ovide was very sensitive to the consolations of his ministry; but if souls did not enter into the paths of grace at once, he expressed neither discontent nor bitterness, but regret... regret at seeing that a soul had let pass a chance of sharing life and the very happiness of God.*

— Father, we could then say that as a consequence the apostolic spirit of Ovide Charlebois was pure and disinterested.

— *Don't go and complicate with your distinctions of motives what was so simple in the mind of Father Ovide. For him, it was simply responding to God's love and bringing Indians to love their Father in Heaven.*



— Father Rossignol, can you tell us where the Servant of God forged for himself so greatly apostolic a soul?

— *In the Oblate Rule which asks us to be saints in the service of the Church.*

— Within the Oblate framework, did this heroic life of Bishop Charlebois have its special characteristic?

— Yes, I would freely say the characteristic of slow martyrdom through love of God and the salvation of souls; his retreat notes and his private diary seem to indicate clearly this orientation of his life.

*"All I ask is to wish to accept each moment of my life as so many little martyrdoms, so that if I am not worthy of shedding my blood for You, my entire life may at least become a continual martyrdom. I thus offer You the gift of my life, O good Jesus, I sign it with my blood so that You will not refuse me this grace."*

— But don't you think, Father Rossignol, that that was only a pious thought and a resolution without any follow-up?

— All who knew him will tell you that his life was a continuous martyrdom, lived in joy and simplicity.

— Father, one would already say this was the spirituality of little Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

— Yes, I believe so. A profound study of the documents will bring out no doubt the affinity of soul between the two. That is why, doubtless, Bishop Charlebois felt so much at home with the saint when he discovered her thought 30 years later. Like the little saint, Bishop Charlebois made sanctity and apostolic zeal consist in the ever joyful acceptance of the will of his tender Heavenly Father. His supernatural instinct did not play him false when he asked Pius XI to have the little Carmelite proclaimed Patroness of missionaries.

— How is it, Father, that 46 years of missionary life, instead of lowering such an ideal, served only to develop it?

— Priest or bishop, Bishop Charlebois was always a man of the Rule. He always got up around 4 o'clock in the morning, an hour before the others, so as to perform the exercises demanded by the Oblate Rule. All the exercises he foresaw he would not be able to get done during the day, because of work or travel, he cut off his sleeping time to perform them.

— How could he stand up to such a schedule? Wasn't that stubbornness rather than prudence?

— Father Ovide behaved as though he had an iron constitution for God's service. For him, the framework of the Oblate Rule was to be taken all together: that was how he had promised to seek perfection. Remorseless with himself, he knew how to understand the exceptions we permitted ourselves in the Rule.

— Getting to know the missionary life of Bishop Charlebois, we quickly perceive that he spent more than a third of it travelling: he probably liked to travel?

— I assure you that it was not through pleasure. When we had to walk behind the dogs, sometimes even break a road for them with snowshoes; or again when we had to paddle all day long with the prospect always ahead of us of some portage to be crossed, I assure you we would have preferred to stay at home. As priest or bishop, Bishop Charlebois undertook his trips only with the good of souls in mind.

— You mentioned on the way the miseries and the difficulties of the trips: could you tell us more about them?

— His Lordship was not the man to take things easy. Doubtless he did not purposely make hardships for himself; he drew profit from the trip's difficulties for the good of souls, that was his voluntary martyrdom.

Yet, in one way we could say that he caused some of his own hardships: where many another would have been content with one visit or two to the camps, Father Ovide had scarcely rebuilt his strength than he set out again to visit other Indian groups. He even went as far as Hudson Bay



where the Eskimos were at that time under his jurisdiction. Nothing would keep him from a sick call.

— What was his first consideration in visiting camps or in his numerous trips?

— Teaching, preaching, instructing, hearing confessions. He never lost an occasion to have souls hear the word of God. For the little ones the catechism, for the grown-ups 3 or 4 instructions a day. I remember, among others, that one time when he was on the way to Beauval, he was held up at Delmas. He profited by the delay to preach a three-day retreat in English and French. Another delay at Meadow Lake, another retreat of 4 days in Cree; held up again at Green Lake, 8 days this time. Finally, getting to Beauval, he preached the 8-day retreat he had come for.

— In a few words, Father Rossignol, how would you sum up the apostolic life of Bishop Charlebois?

— A very high missionary ideal, lived all day long during 46 years, an ideal which we could well propose to our young missionaries to imitate today if they want to walk generously and resolutely in the footsteps of Christ their Savior. In a different milieu, he lived the missionary ideal of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus whom he contributed in having proclaimed Patroness of the Missions.

# Ad Jesum

## TWO INSEPARABLE LOVES

*It is very difficult, not to say impossible, to separate Jesus from His divine Mother. Devotion to the Sacred Heart goes hand in hand with that of the Blessed Virgin. We go to Jesus only through Mary. AD JESUM PER MARIAM. Thus, while preaching love towards the Sacred Heart, also preach that of our kind Heavenly Mother. These two loves make only one. These two devotions also make only one: for the homage given Mary is given the Sacred Heart after having been elevated by the perfection and dignity of that good Mother. The Son is not jealous of the honors showered on the Mother. His dignity is not lowered thereby. Far from it, it is increased by the fact that our marks of esteem become much worthier in passing through the hands of Mary."*

Circ. No. 13, Oct. 10, 1917.

## COMPANION OF HIS SOLITUDE

*"Since Easter, I am absolutely alone. I don't need to say that it is lonesome. I have made acts of sacrifice to the Sacred Heart very often to be able to keep up my courage. I sought the task of being a living martyr; now I believe that it is through solitude that God wants to martyrize me. It will not be the martyrdom cruelest to the body; but it will be much more painful to the moral."*

Privatim, May, 1891.

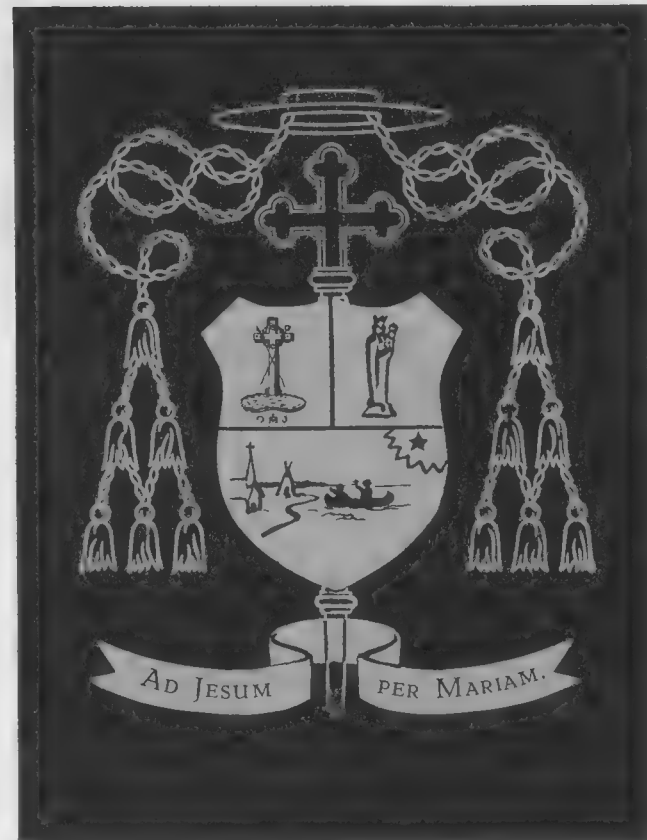
*"Here is my little palace. I am as well as I can be in it. When I am cold, I have only to make a fire in my little stove; when I am lonesome, I sing; when I want to, I go down the stairway and find myself in Our Lord's presence. What have I to fear?"*

*Here I am alone in my modest house; I have no other companion than Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, but He is sufficient for me. He knows how to strengthen me, console me, guide me, make me happy."*

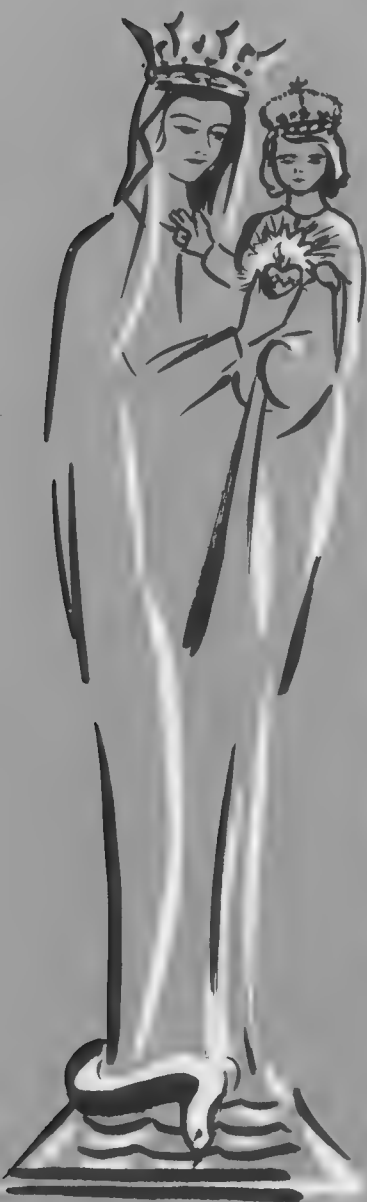
Cumberland, Sept. 17, 1889.

## THE VICARIATE'S PATRONESS

*"After God, our good Patroness, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is truly the one to whom we owe the most. When I was named to take charge of this Vicariate, I found myself*



# per Mariam



of the Lac Caribou  
Mission church.  
in 1925



facing so many difficulties, such a great penury and so discouraging a personal incapacity that I said to myself: "HERE IS TRULY A DESPERATE CASE..."

But, having heard it said that Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was the advocate of such cases, I could not do better than take her as Patroness. I am happy to confess that I have never had reason to regret it. Far from it, for her protection has been quite visible. If we have the happiness of seeing some progress, today, we ought to say and repeat: THANKS TO OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART. We dare hope that from the height of her main altar, she will continue to protect us and make us go from one progress to another."

Address at Blessing of Cathedral.

## PROTECTED BY MARY

We almost perished the other night. Surprised by the wind on the big Bœuf Lake, nearly two hours after midnight, we came close to upsetting in the immense waves. Happily the Mother of the Missionary and his powerful Patroness was there to protect us. We escaped with a fright and getting wet to the skin."

July 5, 1930.

"It seemed to me that the Blessed Virgin held my beads herself and that she led me. So we walked all day without getting lost. There was only one portage we had a little trouble finding. All the others we found right away as though we knew the road."

Missions, 1896, p. 118.



# Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

FOUNDRESS OF THE MISSIONS

## How this idea welled up from the heart of Bishop Charlebois

by His Exc. Bishop Martin Lajeunesse..O.M.I.

You ought first of all to know that Thérèse owned a large place in the heart of the Founder of Keewatin. "He had a lively, almost brotherly affection for her. He smilingly called her: My little Thérèse."

Among Canadians, he was one of the first to know her whose glory he would contribute in a big way. As soon as he knew her, he loved her right away. As though he saw her near him, he spoke to her of his difficulties, of his projects, of his foundations, of his missions.

Thérèse was his friend. He understood and liked her doctrine so well, he who throughout his life had lived in total abandonment and absolute confidence. He preached "the little way of spiritual childhood with that calm tone of gentle authority which was customary with him."

He had tapped the singular power of the Little Flower of the Carmel, showering at his prayer her roses upon his Vicariate. He attributed to her the conversion of the Eskimos of Chesterfield Inlet, then a mission of Keewatin. We are no longer surprised to see him take the initiative in a petition asking the Holy Father to proclaim her Universal Patroness of the Missions.

"THIS IDEA WAS REALLY BORN IN HIS HEART. IT COMES FROM HIM ALONE." This thought, as you will see in a moment, burst forth spontaneously from his heart under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. It is not, in my way of thinking, the result of premeditated project.

Now here is the circumstance, slight in itself, unforeseen and almost commonplace, which caused the idea of the patronage of St. Thérèse to ripen suddenly and burst forth.

It was in May 1925. Bishop Charlebois was in Montreal, resting at the Hotel Dieu. A visitor was announced, one of his friends, Mr. Lionel Bernard, from Belœil. He was occupied at the time with having the Bishops of Canada sign an address of thanks to the Sovereign Pontiff for the Canonization of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Aware of the beloved prelate's devotion for St. Thérèse, he was not worried about getting his signature, quite sure that he would give it with enthusiasm. What was his surprise, then, on presenting the address, to have Bishop Charlebois reply: "I will not sign that."

To Mr. Bernard's urgings, he repeated: "No." After a silence: "You see, as long as I have to write to the Pope, I am going to ask him something." — "What are you going to ask him, Your Excellency?" — "I shall ask him to proclaim St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus Patroness of Missions and of Missionaries."

The idea had just come spontaneously from the heart of Bishop Charlebois. Are we not justified in seeing in this a magnificent intuition, one of those remarks which cannot be explained otherwise than by a profound action of the Holy Ghost?

In a few months, the petition received the signatures of all the Canadian Bishops with Indians missions in their territories. In January, 1926, this request was sent to Rome, and the reply was not delayed: "Cardinal Van Rossum was very satisfied with this praiseworthy initiative; then he asked if St. Thérèse was to be named Patroness of the Canadian missions only or of all the missions of the world. In the latter case, — it seems to be what you are seeking — His Eminence suggested that support be gathered from the French, Italian, Belgian missions, etc., so that all the missions may be represented in this plebiscite on behalf of the celestial patroness of missionaries."

Two hundred and thirty-two signatures were thus gathered; they came from all the missionary bishops, from the poles to the equator. Many were accompanied by enthusiastic letters, praising the favors of the little "Sender of Roses".

The petition won over His Holiness Pius XI. With such an advocate, the cause could only succeed. The decree was thus promulgated solemnly on December 14th. But from the end of November, the decision was taken; Bishop Charlebois learned this from a personal letter from Cardinal Gasparri and hastened to pass on the good news to all the faithful of his Vicariate through a circular letter.

As his faithful secretary, Mr. Bernard, puts it: "Bishop Charlebois' joy was boundless and he showed it by tears of emotion." Tears of gratitude and thanksgiving towards God and His Vicar on earth. It was surely one of his life's greatest joys, a consolation for past trials and a source of comfort for those he had yet to undergo.

Once again God had chosen humble instruments for the accomplishment of his great designs.

by Laurent Poirier, O.M.I.,  
Assistant Vice-Postulator

## ON THE WAY

# Towards Beatification

SERVANT OF GOD..., VENERABLE..., BLESSED...,  
SAINT..., four steps that lead to the altars... to remain  
there.

All who have passed through these steps have never had such an ambition. But before the altar, not upon it, humbly bent down on their knees, they have prayed long and often for their own salvation and that of their brothers.

Such was the case of Bishop Ovide Charlebois. The chapel, the altar, the Eucharist were his strength and consolation in his crucifying apostolate, his superhuman travels, his trials of all kinds. It was there, at the foot of the altar, that he went before the community got up, so as to be alone with his Divine Friend.

On the altar, he loved to see and venerate the Saints of his choice, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to whom he vowed his Vicariate, St. Joseph, to whom he confided his spiritual and material problems and the task of finding the right road in an unknown and deserted country. He avidly read the Lives of the Saints, but he venerated above all St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus whom he succeeded in having declared special Patroness of Missionaries.

Certainly, he admired and did his best to imitate those Saints who adorn our altars and give to our faith a real human touch; but from there to imagining that one day we would think of joining him to the saintly phalanges, there was quite a gap, that of his humility as great as his limitless apostolic zeal.

Who then had the idea of placing the humble missionary of the earth's disinherited, upon the road which leads, if God wills it, to the Glory of Bernini, picture of the Heavenly glory? No one in particular, but a common feeling of admiration, of veneration and finally of devotion. Those who knew him well and who lived at his side were at once convinced of his eternal reward, of his merits, and of his power in Heaven; they felt more need of praying to him than for him. This confidence increased also through favors obtained.

Finally, to follow up such a widespread sentiment, His Exc. Bishop Martin Lajeunesse, then Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin, resolved to undertake on a canonical and official basis the study of the life and virtues of Bishop Ovide Charlebois. He was encouraged in this resolution by the Superior General of the Oblates, Very Rev. Father Leo Deschâtelets.

Under the expert direction of Rev. Father Joseph Morabito, O.M.I., the informative diocesan process on the virtues and the reputation of sanctity of the Servant of God opened at Le Pas on August 15, 1951. This process which the Church holds about any one she considers a possible subject for beatification, is an excessively complicated legal procedure; it is a deepseated and complete inquiry such as few men would like to undergo, and which nobody would dare undertake unless he was firmly convinced in advance of its happy outcome.

We speak today of Bishop Ovide Charlebois by giving him the name of "SERVANT OF GOD"; it is the official title of one who is judged worthy of the inquiry for purposes of beatification. "VENERABLE" is reserved to the Servant of God when the heroism and the renown of his virtues have held up under the triple minute examination of the Diocesan process, of the Introduction to the Roman Court, then of the Apostolic Process.

If after that the examination of the miracles proves the power of intercession in Heaven, the way is open for him to be declared "BLESSED". And when the devotion of the faithful, joined to the intercession of the Blessed, has obtained other miracles, a new Process of the miracles will permit the final coronation of Canonization; it is only then that the Servant of God is declared a "SAINT".

The second phase has begun: the Process of Introduction to the Roman Court. The Diocesan Process has been accepted; the writings have been examined and we are now awaiting the decree of their approbation. During this time work is being done on the POSITIO SUPER INTRODUCTIONE in view of the discussion of the virtues. There is thus some part of the road behind us, and the results to date are encouraging, but there is still a long way to go.

To hasten the issue and assure its success, we need more than patience and the labor of workers: we need God's signature, miracles well authenticated. Many favors obtained through the intercession of Bishop Charlebois give witness already to his credit with God, but we need what are called FIRST CLASS MIRACLES, that is, undeniable miracles, irrefutable proofs of Heavenly intercession and clearly to be attributed to the Servant of God.

For this, let us pray and have others pray through the intercession of Bishop Ovide Charlebois, let us remind ourselves of his power and invoke his help in the midst of our needs and our trials. May God hear our prayers and, in glorifying His servant, favor the imitation of his virtues and the continuation of his work.



### PRAYER

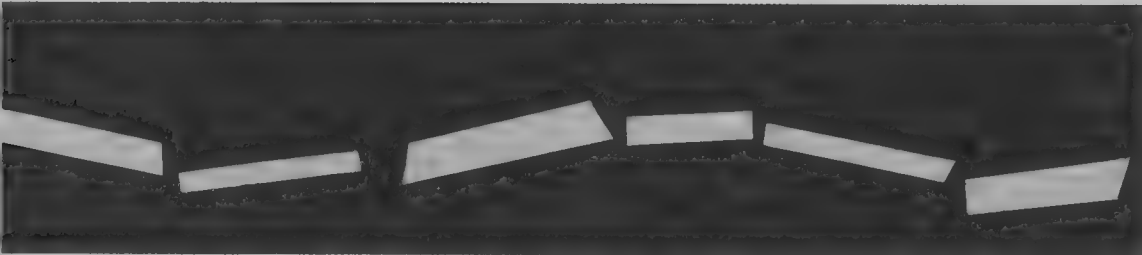
O God, most powerful and good, Who likest to glorify on earth Thine Elect who reign presently with Thee in Heaven, I beg you, through the Immaculate Virgin to kindly make manifest the sanctity of Thy Servant OVIDE CHARLEBOIS, in granting me for his glorification, and through his merits, the special grace which I beg of Thy goodness.

Add 3 Aves and 3 Glorias.

Those who should receive favors through the intercession of Bishop Ovide Charlebois are asked to advise: Rev. Father Provincial, P.O. Box 926, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada.

# The Keewatin Today

— 1949-50-51 —



AFTER 25 YEARS, we cannot recall without great admiration the work of Bishop Charlebois in Keewatin. The spirit of faith with which he undertook the task in 1910 has borne fruit; when he went to render an account of his administration to God in 1933, the Founder of our missions could present an augmentation of 124% in the number of Catholics he had found in 1910. — The number of missionary priests had increased by 142%, thanks particularly to his recruiting which God had deigned to bless.

It is difficult to imagine all that these results meant in arduous work and in confidence in God! It is true that Bishop Charlebois had a secret for reaching the Heart of Jesus: he had a road marked out in the device he chose: "TO JESUS THROUGH MARY".

SINCE 25 YEARS, that is, since the death of its Founder, Keewatin has continued to make progress: it followed the impetus given it. Thanks to his immediate successor, His Exc. Bishop Lajeunesse, O.M.I., the spirit of Bishop Charlebois remained very much alive and continued to bear its fruits.

TODAY, the Vicariate Apostolic of Keewatin comprises a population of 42,000 souls, 15,000 of whom are Catholics. Inasmuch as we can judge by the progress of recent years, it is quite correct to say: "KEEWATIN, LAND OF THE FUTURE."

THE SPIRITUAL GARDEN which was confided us in 1955 in God's Church covers an area of 230,000 square miles, which is 5,750 square miles per priest consecrated to the ministry at present; this makes a territory 75 miles by 75 miles for each missionary.

THE DIVERSITY of races inhabiting "the land of the north wind" is one of the difficulties which our Fathers meet with. To Keewatin well apply the words of the Apostle: "To become all things to all men, to win them to Christ." Indian with the Indians, Metis with the Metis, and what is less difficult, White with the White men. It is the condition of work with any depth among souls. Hence do our missionaries speak the tongue of the people they are evangelizing: they will call the Blessed Virgin "Dégrayé Mari" with the Montagnais, "Kitchiwa Mari" with the Crees, and "Notre Dame" with the French.

ANOTHER ADAPTATION, a more difficult one, is imposed on us by the economic and social development of these regions. The first missionaries had to fight more, it is true, against the elements: they knew nothing of motorboats and snowmobiles; but they did not meet, in their work with the natives, as many obstacles as today, for example with regard to intoxicating beverages and harmful amusements...

by Bishop Paul Dumouchel, O.M.I.  
Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin.



Education itself is a progress which our young Indians do not yet know very well how to utilize: unless we follow them seriously after they have finished going to school, there is even a danger that they may be worse than before.

OUR MISSIONARIES adapt marvelously well their zeal and their preaching to the circumstances, but there is more needed, to meet the requirements: among other organizations, we need everywhere works of formation, of social and Catholic action, but it is not easy to organise them, when most of our Fathers are already overloaded with work.

THE MOST ACUTE PROBLEM in Keewatin at present is that of a LACK OF PERSONNEL. Since the death of Bishop Charlebois, the Catholic population has increased by 90%, but the number of Fathers has not increased by more than 69%. To do honor to the Church, we need 20 more young Oblates in Keewatin.

We urgently recommend to you, dear readers, the intention of MISSIONARY VOCATIONS IN KEEWATIN. Pray to the Holy Ghost then to give light and strength to the Fathers, Brothers and Missionary Sisters and to their lay Associates who devote themselves in this fine portion of the Lord's vineyard. Pray also for replacements, so that beneath the star of Mary Immaculate, the bark of the Keewatin Church may bring to Heaven as many souls as possible for the greater glory of God, Most Holy and Most Good.



## *What Bishop Charlebois*

### *thought of the Vocation of Missionary*

*"Bishop Grandin was quite right to tell us on each visit he made to the Scholasticate or to the Novitiate: 'IF YOU WANT TO COME TO THE NORTHWEST, LOVE THE GOOD LORD A LOT. DO NOT COME FOR LOVE OF ME; BUT FOR LOVE OF THE GOOD LORD.' Yes, dear Brother, missionary life amidst the savages is continual death to ourselves: death to delicacy, death to sensuality, death to our own will, death to all our being, except to our soul which there finds its life.*

*We acquire more virtue in one day among the savages, than in one year among white men. You will not believe me, perhaps, but this is the truth. So if you want to be kind, patient, humble, detached from worldly things, come among the savages. And make no mistake, you have to be all that: for you would miss your shot otherwise. I tell you this to encourage you to pray a lot so that I may have these virtues. Pray especially to obtain a lot of patience for me; it is the most important one."*

*Echo du Cumberland, August 7, 1888.*

*He found it hard to leave his family to enter the Novitiate. "I do not regret making the sacrifice. If it were to begin over again, I would do it without hesitation; but that does not keep it from being hard on the feelings. I could never have been able to stick it out for any other motive than the Missions."*

#### POETRY CHANGES INTO PROSE

*"When you have spent ten to fifteen years in suffering all sorts of miseries; when, harrassed with fatigue, you have to sleep under the open sky, being bitten by mosquitoes or by lice, or else shivering from the cold on a few spruce branches, all this fine poetry will become prosaic."*

#### THE COMMUNITY: A FAMILY, A FORCE

*"So we are going to form a little group of Oblates in this isolated and wild country. My ambition is that we may all be true and holy Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Let us keep a great affection for our dear Congregation: let us love our beautiful vocation, and practise the excellent virtue of fraternal charity, heritage of our holy Founder. Never let us consider ourselves as isolated and independent members, but rather like brothers with but one heart and one soul, even though far away from one another. Let us remain united in thought, affection and union of prayers.*

*"During my visit, I noticed with gladness that these qualities of the true Oblate reign among you all. I have only to engage you to preserve and increase them in yourselves."*

*Circular Letter No. 13, p. 1.*

To preach and work in the footsteps of Bishop Charlebois, join the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate by writing to:

There are 13 different Oblate provinces in Canada alone. You will be directed to the district or work you are most interested in.

**Rev. Father Provincial,**

The Oblate Fathers,  
P. O. Box 926,  
The Pas, Manitoba.

# *In Bishop Charlebois' Footsteps*

## PRESENT MISSIONARIES IN KEEWATIN

Bishop **PAUL DUMOUCHEL**, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic since 1955.

Bishop **MARTIN LAJEUNESSE**, O.M.I., immediate successor of Bishop Ovide Charlebois, Vicar Apostolic from 1933 to 1954, now retired.

48 Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate, with Rev. Father **L. Poirier**, O.M.I., as Provincial.

27 Oblate Brothers of Mary Immaculate.

### Religious Congregations of Women in Keewatin, 1959.

Grey Nuns of Montréal, 41.

Grey Nuns of St. Hyacinthe, 43.

Sisters of St. Martha, 5.

Oblate Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate, 9.

Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, 8.

Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Hyacinthe, 15.

Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Ottawa, 5.

Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, 5.



## Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

### OBJECT:

To assist home and foreign missions conducted by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and to foster vocations and help institutions in which young men are being trained as Oblate Missionaries.

2—to recite at least 3 Hail Marys daily to the intentions of the Association: i.e., for Oblate Missions and Vocations.

3—to make a yearly offering, according to one's means, in a spirit of charity, to foster vocations and missionary works.

### CONDITIONS:

1—to be duly enrolled in the Association, by sending your application for Membership to:

Provincial Director of the M.A.M.I.  
P.O. Box 926,  
The Pas, Manitoba.

### ADVANTAGES:

The Holy Father, sole earthly distributor of the spiritual treasures of the Church, grants countless spiritual advantages to the members of the Association. The members receive the benefits of 365 Masses yearly. Deceased members take part in 38 funeral services. All participate in the prayers, merits and good works of over 7000 Oblates.

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### How to Help Keewatin

If you are willing and able to help the Indian Missions of Keewatin, either in cash or kind, please address: Bishop's Residence, The Pas, Manitoba. Or our official representative in Eastern Canada:

**Rev. Fr. E. Ringuet, O.M.I.,**

Keewatin Indian Missions,  
8844 Notre Dame St. East,  
Montreal, Que.

# Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
Ovide Charlebois, One of Our Own' .....	4
The Indians' Great Friend .....	6
"If we do not become saints..." .....	8
The Wandering Bishop, God's Traveller .....	10
Map of Keewatin: First Episcopal Journey .....	12
"You Who Knew Him..." .....	
Interview on the apostolic life of Bishop Charlebois .....	14
AD JESUM PER MARIAM, his secret, his device .....	16
St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Patroness of the Missions, How this idea came from Bishop Charlebois' heart .....	18
THE SERVANT OF GOD: His Cause for Beatification .....	19
The Keewatin after 25 years, by Bishop Paul Dumouchel .....	20
What Bishop Charlebois thought of the Vocation of Missionary .....	21
In Bishop Charlebois' Footsteps: Present Keewatin Missionaries .....	22

CUM PERMISSU SUPERIORUM

## FAVORS OBTAINED

through the intercession of Bishop Ovide Charlebois.

Emile McCallum is a Cree Indian of Pelican Narrows in Saskatchewan. He knew Bishop Ovide Charlebois while he was a missionary in that district and during his episcopate, and had even travelled with him.

In the Spring of 1957, when 72 years old, Emile McCallum became lame in the feet; he could no longer turn his feet sideways, and the balls and heels were so sensitive that he walked with pain, which of course ruled out his carrying anything, something which is a great infirmity in the life of a trapper.

The doctors he consulted were not encouraging: one told him he would have to go and spend a long period of time in the big hospitals to the south; another let him understand that it might be necessary to cut off his feet.

In his trouble, an inspiration came to Emile: before Easter, he and his daughter made a fervent novena to Bishop Ovide Charlebois. After Easter he wasn't cured, but felt sufficiently improved to leave for his hunting grounds and during the trapping season succeeded in working almost normally. He continued to improve and the following winter old Emile was completely cured of his foot trouble; despite his age he hunts, traps and works without his feet bothering him the least bit.

With gratitude he attributes his cure to the intercession of Bishop Ovide Charlebois, and he came by himself to tell me of his cure while I was at Pelican Narrows on July 10th of the year 1958.

Laurent POIRIER, O.M.I.,  
Provincial of the Oblates of Keewatin.

At the end of the winter of 1951, I began to suffer stomach pains which continued to get worse; then I decided to see the doctor who made the necessary examinations: I was told that I was suffering from stomach ulcers. After a three-week stay in the hospital at Le Pas, I went back to the Bishop's Residence to take up my work again while continuing to follow my diet but I kept feeling the same pains.

It was then that Bishop Martin Lajeunesse, O.M.I. said to me: "Sister, make a novena to Bishop Charlebois, O.M.I., and you will get well." I made the novena with great confidence and each day I felt my condition getting better, and at the end of the novena I was perfectly cured, leaving aside both diet and medicine, and I have never felt any of these pains since.

My gratitude is lively towards Bishop Charlebois, O.M.I., and I profit by this account to tell once again of my gratitude for his great kindness. May God glorify his servant, that is my greatest wish.

(Signed) Sister Saint Simeon,  
Sister of St. Martha.

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The present album was prepared by the magazine  
L'Apostolat des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée, Richelieu, Qué.

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